

Insights Daily Current Affairs, 26 December 2017

www.insightsonindia.com/2017/12/26/insights-daily-current-affairs-26-december-2017/

InsightsIAS

Insights Daily Current Affairs, 26 December 2017

Paper 2:

Topic: Role of civil services in a democracy.

Good Governance Day 2017



Context: Good Governance Day is observed annually on December 25th, the birth anniversary of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee. Good Governance Day was established in 2014 to honor Mr Vajpayee by fostering awareness among the people of accountability in government. In keeping with this principle, the Good Governance Day has been declared to be a working day for the government.

Objectives of Good Governance Day:

- To make people aware about the government commitment for providing a transparent and accountable administration in the country.
- To enhance the welfare and betterment of the people.

- To standardise the government functioning and to make it a highly effective and accountable governance for the citizens of the country.
- To implement the good and effective policies to complete a mission of good governance in India.
- To enhance the growth and development in the country through good governance.
- To bring citizens closer to the government to make them active participants in the good governance process.

Sources: the hindu.

Topic: Role of civil services in a democracy.

Centre moves SC against fixed term for police chiefs



The Union government has filed an interlocutory application in the Supreme Court to amend a 2006 order of the court that is being used by the States to appoint “favourites” as Directors-General of Police.

What's the issue?

A 2006 court order ensured a two-year fixed term for the DGPs. The court issued the order for a fixed two-year term for the DGPs after Prakash Singh, former DGP of Uttar Pradesh, filed a petition on police reforms. However, some States are misusing the order and appointing officers about to retire, giving them a fixed term of two years, irrespective of the superannuation date. Most of the time these appointments are done for political gains as the officer will be obliged to return favours. The implementation of the order is not monitored effectively.

Background:

The All India Services Act, 1951, bars any officer from remaining in office after retirement, unless cleared by the Centre. The Home Ministry is the cadre-controlling authority for IPS officers, and the Supreme Court order is being increasingly misused by the States to appoint officers close to the regime.

Need for fixed tenure:

Transfers are often used as instruments of reward and punishment, with officials being frequently transferred on the whims and caprices as well as the personal needs of local politicians and other vested interests. Officers, especially those in the All India Services, serving in state governments, have no stability or security of tenure.

Therefore, it is felt that guaranteeing a 'minimum assured tenure' in postings would effectively deter politicians from using transfers as a threatening weapon against the babus (read bureaucrats). Fixing tenure of bureaucrats will also promote professionalism, efficiency and good governance.

Way ahead:

The Ministry is planning to lay down guidelines to ensure that only those who had a minimum of one-and-a-half to two years to retire were included in the panel.

Sources: the hindu.

Topic: Development processes and the development industry the role of NGOs, SHGs, various groups and associations, donors, charities, institutional and other stakeholders.

Action plan for the backward districts

Key parameters for evaluation

Health & nutrition



Attended birth, immunisation, breast-feeding & stunting

Education



Computing & reading ability, attendance & vocational education

Sanitation



Access to toilet, drinking water

Infrastructure



Electricity, internet, road & potable water

Financial inclusion



Employment, access to banking & households covered under direct benefit transfer schemes

Progress on each indicator will be monitored quarterly and annually; districts will then be ranked based on performance

Context: The government has drawn up tailor-made action plans for 115 identified “most-backward” districts in the country to improve their socio-economic profiles by making available basic services like healthcare, sanitation and education as well as basic physical infrastructure like roads and drinking water supply in a time-bound manner.

Focus: The government’s focus is to work with states to bring a transformative change in these backward areas through rapid government-anchored programmes and interventions by 2022, the 75th year of India’s independence.

Selection of backward districts:

The 115 districts, including 35 affected by left-wing extremism, were selected on parameters like deprivation (extent of landless households), health & nutrition (institutional delivery, stunting of children and wasting in children), education (elementary dropout rate and adverse pupil-teacher ratio) and infrastructure (un-electrified homes, lack of toilets, villages not connected by road and lack of drinking water).

Need for tailor made action plans:

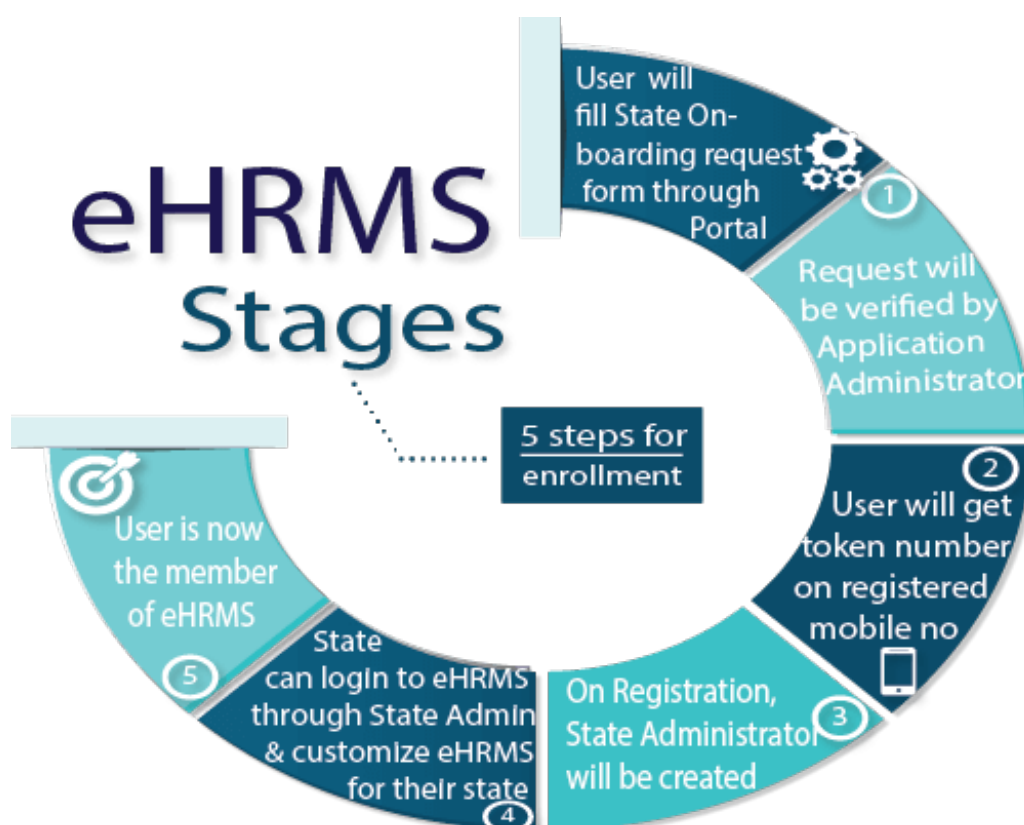
In 2016, India ranked 131 among 188 nations in the UN Development Programme’s human development index (HDI) with major inter-state and inter-district variations. Nearly 40% of children born in India are stunted and/or underweight while almost 50% of women are anemic. On nutrition, India even lags behind its neighbours such as Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Nepal and China.

Among states, in Jharkhand nearly 50% children are underweight, 64% of class 5 students can't read standard 2 English, density of population to doctor/hospital beds are the lowest in the country and 40% households are not electrified. While at least one district has been included from each state under the backward district programme, Jharkhand has the highest number of districts with 19, followed by Bihar (13) Chattisgarh (10) and 8 each in Uttar Pradesh, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha.

Sources: et.

Topic: e governance.

electronic-Human Resource Management System (e-HRMS)



Context: The government has launched electronic-Human Resource Management System (e-HRMS) for central government employees.

About e- HRMS:

What is it? It is an online platform for central government employees to apply for leave and access their service-related information.

Benefits for employees: With launch of e-HRMS, employees will be able to not only see all their details with respect to service book, leave, GPF, salary, etc. but also apply for different

kind of claims/reimbursements, loan/advances, leave, leave encashment, LTC advances, tour etc. on a single platform. They will also be able to track status and match details instantly.

Benefits for the government: Availability of centralized data will enable Government for policy research and planning as such educational qualifications and other competencies and deficiencies may be easily obtained. It will enable Government to take transfer and posting decisions more pragmatically based on reliable first hand data.

Sources: pib.

Paper 3:

Topic: economics of animal-rearing.

Fund to help milk co-ops expand capacity

Context: The National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development will soon get going on a Rs 8,000-crore fund that the finance minister announced in this year's budget to support the dairy sector. Under the Dairy Processing and Infrastructure Development Fund, Nabard is the nodal agency to finance projects over a period of three years.

Benefits of this fund:

After Operation Flood which ended in 1990, this is the biggest dairy development programme. It will surely help small dairy cooperatives in states like Punjab, Haryana and Bihar where there is huge scope of expansion. The fund would help dairy cooperative in setting up modern milkprocessing infrastructure, expanding product portfolio and ensuring optimum value for their products.

Significance of this move:

NABARD targets to sanction proposals to create new milk processing capacity of 27 million litres per day in the cooperative sector this year. With this investment, the milk processing capacity (in the cooperative sector) would increase from the current 66 million litres per day to 92.6 million litres per day. Further, the bulk milk-chilling capacity would go up from 48 million litres per day to 63 million litres.

Background:

The dairy processing infrastructure of cooperatives needs modernisation and capacity enhancement, and with most cooperatives sharing their profits with milk producers, they need support.

Nabard:

It is an apex development and specialized bank established on 12 July 1982 by an act by the parliament of India. Its main focus is to uplift rural India by increasing the credit flow for elevation of agriculture & rural non farm sector.

- It was established based on the recommendations of the Committee set up by the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) under the chairmanship of Shri B. shivaraman.
- It replaced the Agricultural Credit Department (ACD) and Rural Planning and Credit Cell (RPCC) of Reserve Bank of India, and Agricultural Refinance and Development Corporation (ARDC).
- It has been accredited with “matters concerning policy, planning and operations in the field of credit for agriculture and other economic activities in rural areas in India”.

Important functions:

- It Serves as an apex financing agency for the institutions providing investment and production credit for promoting the various developmental activities in rural areas.
- It takes measures towards institution building for improving absorptive capacity of the credit delivery system, including monitoring, formulation of rehabilitation schemes, restructuring of credit institutions, training of personnel, etc.
- It regulates the cooperative banks and the RRB's, and manages talent acquisition through IBPS CWE.
- NABARD is also known for its 'SHG Bank Linkage Programme' which encourages India's banks to lend to SHGs.

Sources: pib.

Topic: Conservation, environmental pollution and degradation, environmental impact assessment.

CPCB may consider using LiDAR devices to monitor air pollution



The Central Pollution Control Board is planning to use advanced LiDAR (Light Detection and Ranging) devices to vertically monitor the air quality of Delhi-NCR. The agency is currently focusing on strengthening its surface-level monitoring network, however, in 'later stages', vertical monitoring will also be taken up.

What is LIDAR?

LIDAR, which stands for Light Detection and Ranging, is a remote sensing method that uses light in the form of a pulsed laser to measure ranges (variable distances) to the Earth. These light pulses—combined with other data recorded by the airborne system—generate precise, three-dimensional information about the shape of the Earth and its surface characteristics.

Types: Two types of LIDAR are topographic and bathymetric. Topographic LIDAR typically uses a near-infrared laser to map the land, while bathymetric lidar uses water-penetrating green light to also measure seafloor and riverbed elevations.

Applications: LIDAR systems allow scientists and mapping professionals to examine both natural and manmade environments with accuracy, precision, and flexibility. Scientists are using LIDAR also to produce more accurate shoreline maps, make digital elevation models for use in geographic information systems, to assist in emergency response operations, and in many other applications.

Sources: the hindu.

Facts for Prelims:

Bharatiya Nirdeshak Dravya (BND-4201):

What is it? It is India's first home-grown high purity gold reference standard. It was launched recently. It is the reference material for gold of '9999' fineness (gold that is 99.99% pure). It will be beneficial to the consumers and public at large to ensure purity of gold.

Benefits of the new standard: Once the BND's of other purity gold are made available in the market, jewellers will move towards more instrumental methods rather than the conventional fire assay methods for testing, which are not only time consuming but also not environment friendly as poisonous gases are released. Gold reference standard is indispensable in gold and jewellery hall marking. This will also be useful for Collection and Purity Testing Centres to certify the purity of gold deposits under the gold monetisation scheme.